TC 1811

The Honorable Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

For many years members of the United States Congress from both parties have grown increasingly concerned about the tragic situation in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor. At this time, we would like to register our support for increased diplomatic efforts by the United Nations agencies, including efforts to bring about the release of East Timorese political prisoners. We also believe the United Nations should intensify its efforts to find a just and peaceful settlement to this long-festering conflict in accordance with United Nations resolutions on the issue, which center on the principle of self determination.

We are aware of the efforts you have made on this matter since assuming office in 1992, in both the field of human rights and in chairing negotiations between Indonesia and Portugal on the East Timor problem. However, the recent acts of desecration aimed at the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy in East Timor underscore the atmosphere of tension and intimidation that prevails in the territory, along with the continuing, severe problems of human rights.

Stepped-up efforts by the United Nations would be timely, especially in light of the upcoming round of talks between Indonesia and Portugal slated for January 1995. The fact that 1995 marks the 50th anniversary of Indonesian independence, which was ultimately facilitated by the United Nations, provides a great opportunity to convince Indonesia of the need to address the East Timor situation in a peaceful, diplomatic manner. A free election under United Nations supervision would be the appropriate means of facilitating an end to this tragedy, which has already caused so much suffering.

We are well aware of the many demands on your time and energy, and appreciate the added effort you may be able to devote to the East Timor matter.

Sincerely yours,